

REMARKS

In this Amendment, the limitation of claim 5 is incorporated into claims 1-4, claim 5 being canceled. The Examiner indicated at page 7 of the Office Action that claim 5 was allowable. Thus, this Amendment presents no issues requiring a further search and/or consideration, and as such, entry of this Amendment at this time is proper.

No new matter has been introduced, and entry of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

After entry of the Amendment, claims 1-4, 6, 8-10, 14 and 15 will be pending in the application.

At page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-4, 8-10 and 14 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being obvious over Hara et al. (U.S. Patent 6,821,107), in view of Esser et al.

The Examiner acknowledges at page 7 of the Office Action that claim 5, reciting that the carrier for cell culture comprises a calcium alginate gel layer, is allowable.

Claims 1 through 4 have been amended to incorporate claim 5, and as such, claims 1-4 are non-obvious and allowable. Further, claims 6, 8-10, 14 and 15 each depend from claim 1, and thus, these claims are likewise non-obvious and allowable.

Withdrawal of this rejection is requested.

Allowance of this application is now believed to be in order. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
USSN 10/690,568

Attorney Docket Q77913

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge any unpaid fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

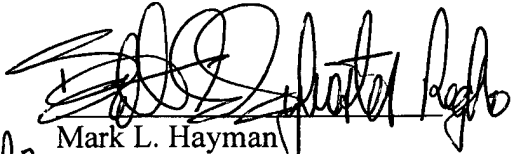
Respectfully submitted,

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